

BOOK REVIEWS

Dragonflies and Damselflies of Northeast Ohio. Larry Rosche. Illustrated by Jacquelyn Haley, Jennifer Brumfield and Kevin Metcalf. 2002. 94 p, approximately 200 colour illustrations. \$18.95.

Dragonflies and Damselflies are the most popular group of insects among non-specialist nature watchers after the Lepidoptera. They have long been of interest to many people because of their large size, diurnal habits, and great beauty. In Japan many nature reserves have been made primarily to protect Odonates and in many countries they have their own societies. It is no surprise, then, to see more identification literature being published on them.

I was a little wary of reviewing a book on American species, being a European entomologist myself; however, the *Journal* editors believed my knowledge of the Odonata would be sufficient for the job, and so I have attempted it. The book is a field guide, designed to be taken out into the countryside and used *in situ* for the identification of living species. It covers 124 species from the 9 counties of Northeastern Ohio and each species is illustrated in colour, often with additional illustrations of the important abdominal segments. The book is ringbound, which gives it the advantage of staying open at whatever page you lay it down open, something that is quite useful in the field.

Each species is also described textually and information is supplied on rarity, habitat preferences, and flight times as well as on physical structure. The book is prefaced with a small introduction to Odonate biology and is suffixed with a number of addenda giving additional visual identification charts for Spiketails, Bluets, and Dancers along with a chart delineating flight times and rarity of all species included in the book. The chart of Bluet AS 2 and AS 8-10 segments for males should be particularly useful.

The authors repeat, several times, that this book will allow for field identification with close focusing binoculars, but personally, I have my doubts about this. While field identification of uncaught specimens is entirely possible, and even easy in some cases, once you know the species, it is often difficult to near impossible for very similar species or for people unfamiliar with the animals they are studying. Furthermore, while it is also true that killed and set specimens lose their colours quickly, this does not mean that we should all throw our nets away; indeed part of the joy of studying Odonates is the skill of hunting and catching them alive. Personally I have found the best approach, when dealing with new or unfamiliar species, is to catch the specimen and then to identify it while it is held in the hand. One soon learns to avoid the attempts at biting and to prevent the animals damaging themselves while held. This method has the advantage that characteristics can be examined minutely and at leisure and then released into the wild again. It also allows salient points to be brought into close focus when leading guided walks or teaching others species' identification. Some tips on

catching Odonates in a net might, therefore, have been a useful addition for people new to entomology.

The book is factually accurate as far as I can tell and should prove a great boon to naturalists working in the designated area, as well as in nearby areas where the book's broad scope will make it equally useful. If used in the manner I have suggested above, I suspect it will be very successful as an identification guide. However I was struck by several fundamental differences between this guide and the European ones I am used to using myself. The first obvious difference is in the illustrations. It is very noticeable that no wing venation is included in the illustrations, this was somewhat of a shock to someone who is used to, not only having the wing venation drawn for every species, but in using the venation to clarify identification. In some cases, while this is not possible when viewing through binoculars, it is when dealing with hand held specimens as explained above. Secondly, the illustrations all looked a little fuzzy, not properly focused to me. This image was reinforced when I compared the images in this book with those in some of my European texts. While I have great appreciation of, and respect for the work of any artist, and I am not suggesting that the images in this work are inadequate, I think all concerned would be surprised if they saw the quality of the illustrations European Odonatologists are used to, especially in a book such as *Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland* by Steve Brooks and illustrated by Richard Lewington.

I also feel improvements could be made in the textual descriptions of the animals, although they are clear and follow the standard Lepidopteran county list type format. However, in an identification guide, especially one hoping to be used for distance identification, I would have thought the descriptions could have been better worded, so as to focus the observers' attention on those characteristics needed to distinguish similar species. For example, the statement "This species is almost identical to the Ruby Meadowhawk." (p 49), should be followed by a sentence starting "The best means of separating the two are . . ." rather than by the sentence which does follow it.

To sum up, this is a rather useful, attractive, and neatly produced little book that will undoubtedly bring an increase of joy in the natural world to many people, although I think that if the publishers are going to reissue it sometime in the future, a few improvements could be positively made.

GORDON RAMEL

The Earthlife Web
<http://www.earthlife.net/>

Columbus, Ohio: A Personal Geography. Henry Hunker. 2000. Ohio State University Press, Columbus, OH. 220 p. \$35.00 hardcover.

This book was written to give an account of the past fifty years in Columbus, from the era post World War II through the late 1990s. Columbus is presently the largest city in Ohio, a fact that may be unknown to many people, and is a city that deserves recognition for what

it has become, especially given that it is Ohio's state capital. The author, Henry Hunker, gives a history of the city as it has evolved and changed since the first time he visited in 1946. Initially, he shares that he found Columbus to be a city that was relatively unremarkable or memorable. He was pleasantly surprised upon moving there in 1949 after being accepted to OSU for graduate studies in geography. Hunker found Columbus likeable enough to spend the following fifty years of his life there; he is currently a professor emeritus at OSU, and has raised four sons in the city.

Having been born in Columbus and having spent much of my life there, I was excited to review this book. Initially, I saw the word "Geography" in the title and, as I am not a geographer (nor do I have any background in the area), I worried that the book might not be pertinent and helpful to me. However, I quickly found it to be fascinating, especially since Hunker added personal anecdotes in addition to the information he had gathered from others.

The book contains fourteen chapters, beginning with physical setting and demographic background. From there, Hunker continues by sharing information concerning the growth of Columbus, and by looking at city leadership, economic development, cultural diversity, and the quality of life of its residents.

Columbus, founded in 1812, has since expanded to be a city that includes portions of six counties, in addition to the initial county, Franklin. Even more impressive is another fact that Hunker shares—Columbus grew while Ohio's other large cities decreased in population. Hypotheses and rationalizations for the city's manner of growth were given, explaining the history of certain suburbs' growth. Specifically, when growing up in the suburb of Worthington, I always heard that "the Worthington/Dublin areas were *the* areas to live in around Columbus." Later, I heard the same about Hilliard and then about New Albany. Hunker's history verifies this truly was the growth trend.

One component of the book that I found especially surprising was the fact that Hunker devotes much explanation and history about the growth of "shopping" in Columbus. This includes Columbus' early shopping that was located downtown, and the impact of the growth of larger shopping areas that were not situated downtown. For instance, in the past year, Polaris, a large new mall, has been completed and opened. Although I no longer live in the Columbus area, I have continuously heard, first from those I know who are still in that area, and then from those in other areas of the state, that Columbus is one of the best cities for shopping, especially with the new Polaris, Easton, and

relatively new Tuttle, malls. This also coincides with statements and explanations in the book.

However, as Hunker also devotes much time and explanation to the decline of several other once-popular locations in Columbus, I was surprised that the French Market/Continent area was never mentioned. Built in a style that was supposed to feel old-European, this area was popular as I grew up, and continues to be an area that people still mention when discussing Columbus, in regards to both its past popularity and its current decline.

Also interestingly, Hunker provides answers to many rumors that circulated throughout the years. One example is Ameriflora, an international horticulture occurrence which was greatly hyped up, before-hand; enjoyed by Columbus residents, during; and rumored to be known throughout the US as a "bomb." Hunker explains how the event was supposed to bring millions of dollars to Columbus, and that it was positively regarded by residents and businesses, but was deemed by the nation as "An Odd Hybrid Called Ameriflora Struggles in Ohio" (titled in the *New York Times*). Most Columbus residents heard that it was supposed to be of international and/or national interest, but that it had not succeeded as much as planned. Other big events in Columbus, such as the "Son of Heaven" exhibit, are also explained.

Henry Hunker, a faculty member at The Ohio State University for many years, is known in the department of geography at OSU, as well as in other venues, for his tours of the city and his activity in preserving Columbus' architectural heritage. As he writes of time and change in the city, including a written version of a tour he gave in 1956 and how it differs in 1999, it was fascinating to find out both how much had changed, and how much had remained nearly the same over the years.

I was surprised and mildly disappointed, however, in the lack of information given about the role of The Ohio State University in the development of Columbus, especially since Hunker is a professor emeritus. As the university is one of the largest in the world and is practically located in downtown Columbus, one would speculate that it would be important in shaping the city's history.

Overall, I recommend this informative book not only to geographers, but also to Columbus residents and to anyone planning a move to the area. In addition, it would be helpful to anyone living in the Columbus suburbs, as they can learn about the inter-relatedness of the central Ohio area.

HEATHER GUTHRIE

University of Akron, Summa Health Systems
Akron, OH 44304